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ARCADIA AND THE GHOSTS OF PERFORMANCE

Arcadia is a pastoral ideal, immutably suspended in place and time; it is both timeless and, like all dreamed-of utopias, nowhere. Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, on the other hand, is located at once very specifically—Sidley Park—and also wherever this or that production builds it: on the stage of the Lyttelton at the National Theatre, London, in the play's inaugural production, but many places since including London's Haymarket (a transfer) and Duke of York's Theatre (a later revival); Paris's Comédie-Française (at first in the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier but, after a quick move, in the Salle Richelieu); and Broadway's Vivian Beaumont Theatre and (sixteen years later) its Ethel Barrymore. Of course, each of these geographically disparate Sidley Parks looks different, too; and this spatial heterogeneity is replicated and intensified temporally, as each of these productions—1993, 2009, 1998, 1995, 2011—was required to toggle among 1809, 1812, and "the present day,"[1] a stage direction with ever-mutating signification. In other words, its characters may never leave Sidley Park, but *Arcadia* nonetheless betrays a radically unstable time and space. Spatially, it is here and there—sometimes simultaneously, when multiple productions are running at once (as happened after the play proliferated in American regional theatres, starting with Washington D.C.'s Arena Stage in 1997). And temporally, like all performed art, it happens now and now and now, from curtain up to curtain down, with each present minute plunging immediately into an irrecuperable past.

Much of the play's scholarly criticism focuses on its juxtaposition of past and present, considering *Arcadia*'s scenes as if they were the sketches of Humphry Repton (a historical source for Mr. Noakes), which overlaid images of "before" on the "after" of his landscape designs. But sketches are visual art, and *Arcadia* is made for live performance. The play thus honours a different

1. Stoppard T., *Arcadia*, London: Faber and Faber, 2000 (reprinted and corrected version), p. 19.

conception of time, one articulated by performance theory and, as it happens, the second law of thermodynamics. Time is "a one-way street,"[2] in the words of James Gleick, whose *Chaos: Making a New Science* was a key influence for Stoppard. Time, like performance, evanesces minute by minute. But it exists perpetually in the present tense of its enactment—at least until the final curtain or until all "end[s] up at room temperature" (104), as Valentine puts it. Stoppard highlights this phenomenon most markedly in the play's exquisite final scene, which precisely evidences Peggy Phelan's much-cited formulation that "[p]erformance's only life is in the present."[3] A glass of wine is shared by Hannah and Septimus, in theory separated by 199 years (in a 2011 performance) or more (in performances of the future), and a single Regency-dressed body incarnates the speaking Augustus (Thomasina's brother) and the mute Gus (Valentine's). Most eloquently, Septimus and Thomasina dance to the music for the (modern-day) party (126). The false dichotomy of theatrical "present" and "past" collapses.

This collapse has ramifications for the play's reception. As a text to be read, *Arcadia* may respect a historical sequence (1809, 1812, etc.), but as performance it unfolds in the present tense, following Stoppard's ordering (Scene 1, Scene 2, etc.). The spectator perceives the intersections between the drama's historical time periods in a manner that honours the performance's—and not historical—chronology. This fact accounts for the play's doubly engaging hold over its audiences: its stage action is at times powered by suspense (as when the third scene ends in anticipation of Septimus's two duels, with no reprise of this plot-point until the sixth scene) and at times by dramatic irony (as when Septimus whispers "Be careful with the flame" to Thomasina (129), after the audience has already learned of her fiery death). Prospect and retrospect entwine as fluidly as the waltzing partners of the play's final scene. We get confirmation that Byron posed for Henry Fuseli in 1812 only after the event has been debunked by a "Fuseli expert in the *Byron Society Journal*" (83) but before a graceful corollary arises: the "present day" assembly posing (in Regency dress) for a photograph before the "annual dressing up" (21). We see the unmasking of a contemporary reviewer (Bernard) to the subject of his review (Hannah) before the parallel unmasking of Septimus to Chater, ostensibly two centuries earlier. And, like Hannah, we understand Thomasina's 1809 desire to find the equation for "a bluebell, and if a bluebell, why not a rose" (49) only after understanding Valentine's present-day grouse project. *Arcadia* teases us by letting us be there in the nineteenth-century present for a moment, a pleasure that the play's historical researchers are denied. But the ephemerality of performance, of time, still asserts itself, and this moment too evanesces—leaving us only with memories of events as irrecoverable as the burnt library at Alexandria that Thomasina mourns. For performance's

2. Gleick J., *Chaos: Making a New Science*, New York, Penguin Books, 1987, p. 257.
3. Phelan P., *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 146.

ontology, to invoke Phelan again, becomes itself through disappearance.[4] Only traces remain: the ghosts of performance.

Arcadia celebrates this central feature of performance more than most plays by thematizing the second law of thermodynamics, which explains the impossibility of going backwards to a past that, we know, haunts and conditions the present. ("You can put back the bits of glass but you can't collect up the heat of the smash. It's gone," Valentine explains, in what would also serve as a definition of performance. "That's what time means." [125-126]). And, fittingly, the play's revivals have exploited the ghosts of its own past performances. The most recent major production, for instance—which opened on March 17, 2011 at Broadway's Ethel Barrymore Theatre—reunited director David Leveaux and set designer Hildegard Bechtler, pivotal contributors to a very well-received production of *Arcadia* that premièred on June 5, 2009 at the Duke of York's Theatre in London's West End; and thus it promised to stir memories from two years earlier and to surrogate key elements of the previous show's success. Amplifying the repetition-with-a-difference that defines all performance, the 2011 production thus mimicked the canny move of the previous Broadway staging, which had opened at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre on March 30, 1995. That production featured the work of director Trevor Nunn and designer Mark Thompson, who were revisiting their previous success with *Arcadia* at London's National Theatre, whose Lyttelton had housed the inaugural production, débuted on April 13, 1993. In his book *The Haunted Stage*, Marvin Carlson theorizes how such theatrical citations of past performance work. By a phenomenon he calls ghosting, audiences are visited by their own memories of previous productions or haunted by the immaterial social memory which clings to the material elements of theatre (sometimes literally pieces of scenery), and which is disseminated, I would add, by reviews and word-of-mouth. These historical traces buoy the currency of cultural memory and keep it refreshed.

Actors, directors, and designers build upon such memory, as Carlson explains, to achieve an effect "whose power lies largely in the contrast with its ghostly predecessor or predecessors."[5] Thus, for example, Bechtler's set of the schoolroom at Sidley Park in New York in 2011 might animate spectres of the near-identical set in London in 2009 (whether the actual remembrances of transatlantic theatregoers or the social memory disseminated by historical traces in the two intervening years). But Bechtler's imposing symmetrical set, with its flat, horizontal upstage wall, might also animate dissident spectres—from London circa 1993 or New York circa 1995—of the stylistically similar and yet geometrically opposite set by Thompson: a large circle whose diameter joined the front row centre audience members to the upstage centre window that looked onto the Crooms'

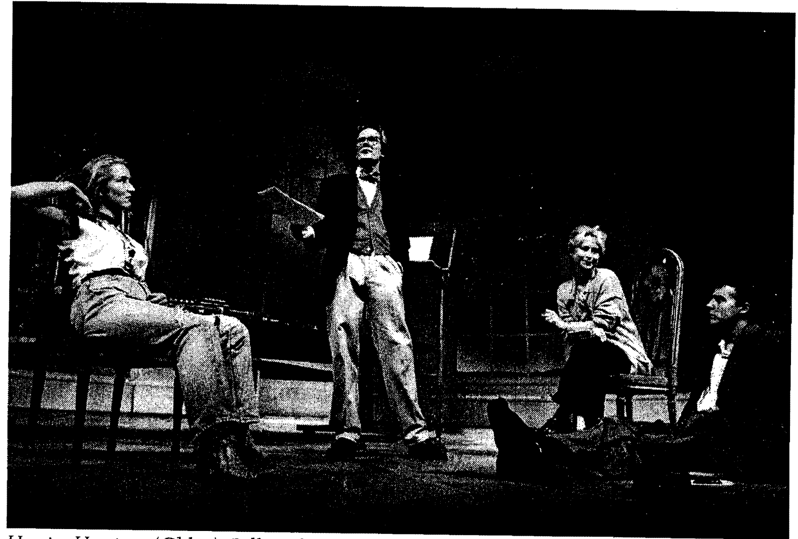
4. *Ibid.*
5. Carlson M., *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2003, p. 99-100.

(and Coverlys') garden. An even more marked contrast would have impressed itself on anyone who had remembered the previous design. Outside the upstage windows, Thompson hazily represented a country estate: "the typical English park of the time" in Stoppard's stage direction (1). But Bechtler represented "only light and air and sky" (Stoppard again), a fuzzy void that honoured the tensions of the play's title and its radical implications for time and space.

Whether they had seen the 1995 Broadway production or just recalled its reception, New York theatregoers in 2011 would have been haunted too by another recycled material element: the body of Billy Crudup. It had entranced Lady Croom, Mrs. Chater, and eventually Thomasina in 1995 (when the twenty-seven-year-old actor, in a career-launching performance, had smouldered as Septimus), and it returned in 2011—slightly aged but further tightened, presumably by Crudup's intervening Hollywood career—to perform as Bernard and to flirt with Chloë, Hannah, and Hermione Coverly. "The recycled body of an actor, already a complex bearer of semiotic messages, will almost inevitably in a new role evoke the ghost or ghosts of previous roles if they have made any impression whatever on the audience,"[6] writes Carlson, who astutely stresses the importance of "the audience's knowledge of or assumptions about the actor's life outside the theatre."[7] In 2011, Crudup may have been ghosted by his work in Stoppard's *The Coast of Utopia* five years earlier, in the Vivian Beaumont, the same house that *Arcadia* made its New York home. Also, in moving Crudup from the play's most romantic role to its most caddish, the 2011 production may have leveraged its audience's prejudices about the actor, who had been the subject of much unwanted press in New York in 2003—that is, between his two *Arcadias*—for abandoning his seven-months-pregnant partner, the actress Mary-Louise Parker, for Claire Danes, who was at the time playing student to his tutor (in an unseemly echo of Thomasina and Septimus) while shooting the film *Stage Beauty* for director Richard Eyre. Crudup's performance, in other words, was multiply haunted: not only by his own past performances (offstage and onstage) but also by his predecessor Bernard, by the performance of Crudup's 1995 castmate Victor Garber. Some members of the 2011 audience would have been visited by the ghost of this previous Bernard, but no one more than Crudup himself, who would have seen and heard Garber's performance literally hundreds of times.

In *Cities of the Dead*, Joseph Roach theorizes surrogation, the process by which a performance substitutes for, carries the social memory of, and is haunted by those that have come before. (Roach characterizes these hauntings evocatively, noting that even when the predecessors have receded in memory, they are "forgotten but not gone."[8]) *Arcadia* exploits surrogation in its produc-

6. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
8. Roach J., *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 2.



Harriet Harrison (Chloë), Bill Nighy (Bernard), Felicity Kendal (Hannah) and Samuel West (Valentine), Lyttelton Theatre/Royal National Theatre, © Donald Cooper/Photostage, 1993.

tions as it thematizes surrogation in its plot. In its third scene, for example, Captain Brice appears before Septimus to make him answer for his adultery with Mrs. Chater, and indeed Brice literally surrogates Ezra Chater, standing in as his proxy. "[W]hatever you have to say to me," Chater explains, "address yourself to Captain Brice" (52). But when Septimus mockingly addresses Brice-as-Chater—"Your wife did not appear yesterday, sir" (52)—he reminds us that performative succession is seldom smooth, the fit between performers and their antecedents always imperfect. When an actor takes on a role ghosted by a previous performance, he submits to being assessed against a predecessor he can never exactly succeed. A supplement might address the lack, of course: Crudup, for example, substituted louche sex appeal for Garber's pitch-perfect donnishness, abetted by costume designer Gregory Gale, who dressed him strikingly differently than Mark Thompson had dressed Garber in 1995. But potential dangers always lurk for the second performer, as indeed Brice adumbrates when he challenges Septimus to a duel and evokes a bloody history of seconds, destined to fight in lieu of the principals they surrogated: "If you cannot attend to me without this tomfoolery, nominate your second who might settle the business as between gentlemen" (53).

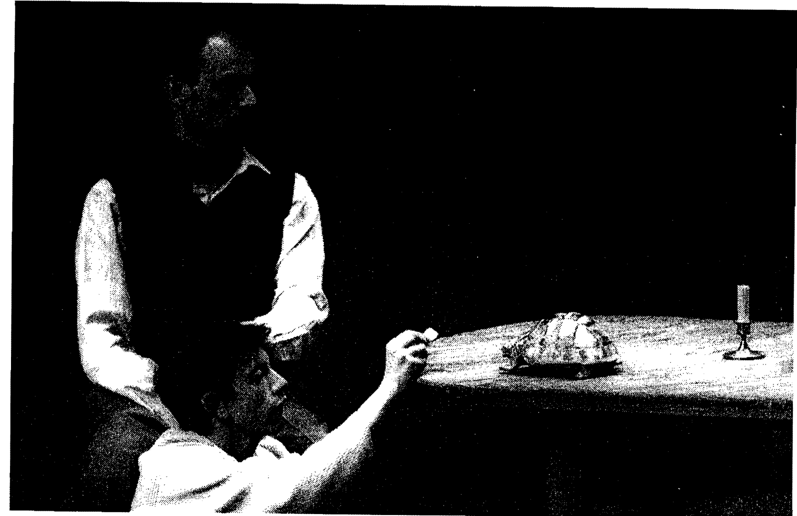
Hauntings from the past inhere in all processes of reception, of course. Even when enjoying a novel, a reader interprets each event, each turn of phrase, with reference to similar instances she has previously encountered. Witness the play's opening—its punning exchange about carnal embrace—which not only mobilizes the spectator's previous experience of the word

carnal but also invokes its ghostly etymon, *caro*. "[A] shoulder of mutton, a haunch of venison well hugged, an embrace of grouse... *caro, carnis*; feminine; flesh," Septimus deviously explains (2). In a similar fashion, the play summons (and plays with) all manner of citations, drawing on the audience's knowledge of physics, literary history, and landscape architecture; of Lord Byron, of course, but also Capability Brown, Humphry Repton, and Thomas Love Peacock, who appears tangentially in its plot but whose *Headlong Hall* provides a thorough-going intertext.[9] Some citations are more obscure than others, which is to say that they call on cultural memories that are, to a greater or lesser extent, forgotten (if never gone). However much a spectator remembers, the citation's past will condition its reception in the present. So it is with past performances. Ghosts linger from performances that occurred only minutes before, as when *Arcadia*'s spectators, learning the fate of Ezra Chater, remember Bernard's identification (several scenes earlier) of "a botanist who described a dwarf dahlia in Martinique and died there after being bitten by a monkey" (29). Sometimes the haunting performances occurred years earlier, in radically different contexts, as when Valentine in 2011 was ghosted by the indelible stage work previously done by the actor, Raúl Esparza, who played him. (Esparza had anchored the 2006 Broadway revival of Stephen Sondheim's *Company* and elevated several previous musicals since his New York début in *The Rocky Horror Show*; for Broadway audiences, he had also memorably embodied iconic characters of both David Mamet and Harold Pinter.) And sometimes the haunting performances occur offstage. Mr. Peacock turns up, too, in the pseudonym that Chloë gives Bernard in lieu of Nightingale, a name which would expose him to Hannah's wrath—Nightingale having panned her book on Caroline Lamb—but which for many of its audiences would call to mind other judgements by another reviewer: Benedict Nightingale, the prominent London theatre critic who has memorably savaged many plays in his career, including Stoppard's *Rough Crossing*.[10]

Carlson finds theatre to be rooted in an even more fundamental ghosting principle: a dramatic text, he claims, is the "identical thing" that the audience has "encountered before,"[11] put in a new theatrical context by each team of artists that brings it to life. But his invocation of an "identical thing" betrays the nature of ghosts, with their uncanny sameness yet difference. Night by night, as actors inhabit the stage, their performances imperfectly cite the past: the matinée earlier that day, yesterday's show, last month's rehearsal,

9. The play's usage of Repton and Peacock is handled in SCOLNICOV H., "'Before' and 'After' in Stoppard's *Arcadia*," *Modern Drama*, n° 47.3, Fall 2004, p. 480-499.
10. NIGHTINGALE B., Rev. of *Rough Crossing*, *New Statesman*, Nov. 9, 1984, in *London Theatre Record*, Oct. 22-Nov. 4, 1984, p. 985. The review begins: "The other day I remarked that parts of a new play sounded as if they'd been concocted by Tom Stoppard after brain-removal. Having now seen that dramatist's adaptation of Molnar, I feel a bit tactless, as if I'd been cracking sick jokes about disintegrating limbs in a leper ward."
11. CARLSON M., *op. cit.*, p. 7.

and so on. And their performances in the present—and even the words they speak—are marked by differences, both conscious and unwitting, that shadow their imperfect citation of what came before. As Valentine instructs: "The unpredictable and the predetermined unfold together to make everything the way it is. It's how nature creates itself, on every scale" (62).



Denis Podalydès (Valentin) et Thomas Blanchard (Gus), Comédie-Française, mise en scène de Philippe Adrien, © Photo Lot, 1999.

The original written text of *Arcadia*, published concurrently with its première at the National Theatre, contains many lines that most audiences have never heard; they mutated or disappeared as the text's performances progressed, citation to citation, from rehearsal rooms to public stages. To give only one example, in the play's seventh scene, Hannah had (how many times?) confirmed to Valentine that she did once have a fiancé, a gardener. "He called me Piglet. He also gave me a piglet, which I called Piglet,"[12] she explains, limning how citation works. Hannah's piglet is like *Arcadia*'s tortoise (an intertextual nod to the one comically killed—every night—in Stoppard's *Jumpers*): different in each production, now Lightning and now Plautus, the tortoise is nonetheless perpetually present. "Perhaps they go back to the first garden,"[13] Hannah surmises in another spectral, redacted speech. This line was presumably gone by April 13, 1993 (that specious origin, the "opening night"); it and others were deleted in the script printed "with corrections" later that year. Yet their echoes remained, one imagines, in the portrayal of Felicity Kendal, who would have said them in the past and also used them

12. STOPPARD T., *Arcadia*, London: Faber and Faber, 1993 (original, uncorrected version), p. 75.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

in building her character. (As for the spectators' reception of this character, the actress's ghosts almost certainly appeared. Kendal's affair with Stoppard, which began several years before *Arcadia*—during their 1988 collaboration on the science-obsessed *Hapgood*, in which Kendal played the titular lead—had resulted in her separation from her husband and Stoppard's from his wife. The affair thus deliciously echoed their previous collaboration on 1982's *The Real Thing*, which concerns the extramarital dalliance between a playwright and an actress, played by Kendal. That is, in *Arcadia*, ghosts from Kendal's private life would have worked in harmony and dissonance with those of her public performances. Even before her Stoppard roles, she was well known for characters including Barbara Good on the multi-season BBC sitcom *The Good Life*—in its way another English pastoral dream.)

No performance of *Arcadia*, even one whose cast begins with the play's "corrected" version, replicates this text identically. Two traces of a single performance—August 23, 1995 at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre—linger in the archives of New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, where researchers can examine videotape of the evening's show[14] alongside the typescript used by the videographer. Following these two texts against the "corrected" published version, one encounters literally hundreds of differences: the actors' lines do not perfectly match the videographer's typescript, which does not match the published text (itself, we have seen, different from the publication that preceded it). Over eight hundred words have been cut, presumably during the rehearsal process (although, as with Kendall's "Piglet" lines, they would have haunted the actors' performances). Beyond the substitutions typical when a British play moves to another culture—"cad" replaced "blackguard," "bullshit" replaced "bollocks," "sneakers" replaced "trainers," for instance—numerous lines were added. Some of these may have reflected the actors' desire, conscious or not, to clarify *Arcadia*'s dizzying plot. For example, Lisa Banes's Lady Croom amended her description of Mr. Chater from "plant-gatherer to my brother's expedition" (94) to "botanist to my brother's expedition in Martinique," aligning her words more closely with Bernard's description of Chater, three scenes earlier. And the "Hundreds of pages. Thousands" (36) discovered in the Sidley Park hermitage grew, in the utterance of Blair Brown's Hannah, to "Thousands of pages. Tens of thousands," thus driving home what Septimus may have been scribbling about: after all, it would require "thousands of pages—tens of thousands" (68), as Valentine later explains, to calculate an iterated equation such as Thomasina's.

A final set of differences will serve to demonstrate the changeable nature of the text that performance animates and ghosts haunt. In Stoppard's "corrected" version of the play, Chloë and Bernard have the following exchange in the second scene:

14. Stoppard T., *Arcadia*, videorecording taped at Lincoln Center Theater at the Vivian Beaumont, New York, Aug. 23, 1995, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Theatre on Film and Tape Archive.

> Chloë: I bet she's [*i. e.*, Hannah] in the hermitage, can't see from here with the marquee…
> Bernard: Are you having a garden party?
> Chloë: A dance for the district, our annual dressing up and general drunkenness. The wrinklies won't have it in the house, there was a teapot we once had to bag back from Christie's in the nick of time, so anything that can be destroyed, stolen or vomited on has been tactfully removed; tactlessly, I should say—
> Bernard: Um—look—would you tell her—would you mind not mentioning my name just yet?[15] (21-22)

The videographer's typescript, meanwhile, records the following, which is noted as approved (presumably by Stoppard) on January 24, 1995:

> Chloë: I bet she's in the hermitage, can't see from here with the digger… I must say it's not favourite, the gardens looking as if the drains are blocked just where the marquee is going to be.
> Bernard: Are you having a garden party?
> Chloë: A dance for the district, our annual dressing up and general drunkenness. The wrinklies won't have it in the house, there was a teapot we once had to bag back from Christie's in the nick of time, so anything that can be destroyed, stolen or vomited on has been tactfully removed; tactlessly, I should say—
> Bernard: Um—look—would you tell her—would you mind not mentioning my name just yet?[16]

But on August 23, 1995, at least, Haviland Morris's Chloë and Victor Garber's Bernard said this, as the videotape trace confirms:

> Chloë: I bet she's in the hermitage, can't see from here with the digger… Ugh, I must say it's not favourite, the gardens look as if the drains are blocked just where the tent is going to be.
> Bernard: Are you having a garden party?
> Chloë: A dance for the district, our annual costume ball and general drunkenness.
> Bernard: Um—look—would you tell her—would you mind not mentioning my name just yet?[17]

Individually, the differences are not extraordinary: a line for Chloë was added for the production ("I must say…"), and then changed in performance (from "marquee" to "tent"); another was cut entirely ("The wrinklies…"); the Britishism

15. The original, "uncorrected" publication differs slightly again: see Stoppard T., *op. cit.*, 1993, p. 16-17.
16. Stoppard T., *Arcadia*, unpublished typescript dated Jan. 24, 1995, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Billy Rose Theatre Division, p. 1.2.22-23.
17. Stoppard T., *Arcadia* (videorecording, 1995), *op. cit.*

"dressing up" was altered by Morris or her director to "costume ball." But the cumulative effect of such variations, which ripple through all seven scenes of the play, is substantial. Several cuts in 1995 minimize Septimus's attachment to Lady Croom—including the deletion of Thomasina's (correct) allegation that "You are churlish with me because mama is paying attention to your friend" (49)—as if the creative team worried that a New York audience might find it unseemly, Septimus's love for the mother only three years of historical time—and, much more crucially, an hour of stage time—before his love for her daughter. The changes, in other words, remind us too that the act of performance involves not only an imperfect citation (as with an actor who inherits a predecessor's role and faces the impossibility of perfect succession) but also a necessary translation (with its attendant supplements, like Crudup's sex appeal). The resulting differences are as discernible as those that mark *Arcadia*'s foreign productions, as for example when Bernard and Chloë entered Sidley Park, as imagined by French designer Claire Belloc, at Paris's Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier in 1997 and had the following exchange (or something close to it):

> CHLOË: Je parie qu'elle est dans l'ermitage. On ne peut pas voir d'ici, à cause de la tente...
> BERNARD: Vous donnez une réception?
> CHLOË: C'est le bal du comté. La soirée annuelle style beuverie et cotillon. Les vieux ne veulent plus que ça se passe à l'intérieur. Une année, il a fallu récupérer *in extremis* une théière qui était déjà en vente chez Christie's... Désormais, tous ce qui peut se casser, se voler ou se vomir dessus est poliment mis sous clé. Enfin, impoliment, plutôt...
> BERNARD: Euh... Juste une chose... Si ça ne vous fait rien, j'aimerais autant qu'elle ne sache pas mon nom... Enfin, pas toute de suite[18]...

A survey of *Arcadia*'s reviews reveals how palpably the ghosts of past performance haunt the play's productions. Ben Brantley's *New York Times* review of the 2011 Broadway revival situates his reception of the play against the "uniform surface sparkle" of the 2009 London revival and in the context of the "many times" he claims to have seen it.[19] Sixteen years earlier (and less grandiosely), Margo Jefferson's *New York Times* review of the 1995 Broadway production immediately juxtaposed her experience of it with the social memory generated in 1993: "I am told that the original London production worked perfectly," she writes, even if "I did not see it."[20] In his review for *Variety*, Jeremy Gerard wrote that the 1995 actors "fight an echo."[21] He means acoustically, but the formulation resonates, especially with his later observation that "[Jennifer Dundas] and Crudup are at a loss to re-create the electricity generated by Emma Fielding and Rufus Sewell, the original Thomasina and Septimus."[22] Imagining the performance in New York as heat exchange—as an attempt to recapture energy generated in London—Gerard thus leverages Thomasina's discovery of entropy, echoed in "a prize essay of the Scientific Academy in Paris" (108). "It concerns your heat engine," she explains to Mr. Noakes: "Improve it as you will, you can never get out of it what you put in. It repays eleven pence in the shilling at most" (115). The theoretical insight of Thomasina's précis, of course, produces yet other echoes for the spectators: for some, of Jean-Baptiste Joseph Fourier, who in 1811 wrote the essay to which Stoppard alludes; for others, of Nicolas Léonard Sadi Carnot, whose 1824 book *Réflexions sur la puissance motrice du feu* made possible the second law of thermodynamics. Both this law's articulation and Carnot's book occurred outside of the play's nineteenth-century frame. But the confused chronology of these echoes befits a play that disregards the historical timeline for the cacophonous intensity of the present, with its orchestra of ghosts.

It is possible that Crudup and Dundas brought an inadequate supplement when they inherited their roles from Fielding and Sewell, whose performances I never saw. But while attuned to its haunting quality, the *Variety* reviewer's reference to the British actors as the "originals" nonetheless betrays his misunderstanding of performance—and, indeed, of the play, which warns critics against mistaking *Arcadia* for the stability and timelessness of its pastoral namesake. For the play, I have said, encourages a different view of its performance history (and, indeed, history more generally) as a genealogy of citations, endlessly receding into memory, forgotten, perhaps, but not gone. "Here, look—Capability Brown doing Claude, who was doing Virgil. Arcadia!" as Hannah notes (her *doings* underscoring the performative nature of such citations) when she explains that "English landscape was invented by gardeners imitating foreign painters who were evoking classical authors" (34). After all, even the play's first public performance was ghosted by what had come before, and not only because of Stoppard's densely allusive style. As Sheridan Morley of *The Spectator* saw in his review of the inaugural production, "Several ghosts haunt the long dining-table which dominates the set of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* on the Lyttelton stage of the National," including "Lady Bracknell, not yet born but hovering over the proceedings already"[23]—a reference to Oscar Wilde's indelible creation in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which Stoppard sometimes seems to echo.

And yet perhaps the longing for an original, too, is essential to Arcadia, *Arcadia*, and all performance, which Roach characterizes as the "doomed search

18. STOPPARD T., *Arcadia*, J.-M. BESSET (trans.), Arles, Actes Sud, 1998, p. 27.
19. BRANTLEY B., "The 180-Year Itch, Metaphysically Speaking," Rev. of *Arcadia*, *New York Times*, March 18, 2011, p. C1.
20. JEFFERSON M., "Tom Stoppard, Virtuoso and Show-Off," Rev. of *Arcadia*, *New York Times*, April 9, 1995, p. 5.
21. GERARD J., Rev. of *Arcadia*, *Variety*, April 3, 1995, p. 150.
22. *Ibid.*
23. MORLEY S., Rev. of *Arcadia*, *The Spectator*, April 24, 1993, in *Theatre Record*, April 9-22, 1993, p. 405.

for originals by continuously auditioning stand-ins."[24] Centuries before Virgil's *Eclogues*, Hesiod's *Works and Days* had already represented a golden race of men living in idyllic harmony with nature. Centuries before Virgil, in other words, an idealized pastoral that never was already had its passing mourned:

> they lived like gods, carefree in their hearts,
> shielded from pain and misery. Helpless old age
> did not exist, and with limbs of unsagging vigor
> they enjoyed the delights of feasts, out of evil's reach.
> A sleeplike death subdued them, and every good thing was theirs;
> the barley-giving earth asked for no toil to bring forth
> a rich and plentiful harvest. They knew no constraint
> and lived in peace and abundance as lords of their lands,
> rich in flocks and dear to the blessed gods.[25]

If the longing for a prelapsarian original defines Arcadia, so too does this mourning. Even in Hesiod's pastoral, death is present (and the golden-age men, he reports, never left the earth but are benevolent ghosts that haunt it). *Et in Arcadia ego*, as Death declares on the tomb inscription of Nicolas Poussin's Arcadian shepherds: "Even in Arcadia, there am I," as Septimus cites (18) and Lady Croom mis-cites (16).

The phrase *Et in Arcadia ego* did not originate with Poussin's Arcadian shepherds.[26] The first speaker has long receded, however strongly the ghostly echo of the utterance remains. But if the phrase's origin in Poussin is often asserted, it testifies to the resilient fiction of recoverable origins that provides another of the play's themes. Hannah derides Brown doing Claude doing Virgil, but her palindromic name, as Hersh Zeifman has noted,[27] marks her Newtonian biases, her faith that the past can be accurately reconstructed from its historical traces, such as the game books, letters, and periodicals (from two different centuries) that accrue on the set's central table. Not that Hannah shouldn't try: the search for knowledge is as persistent as death—as the play represents in its most concise dumbshow, when Gus hands Hannah an apple just downstage of the Edenic Sidley Park. And, like the play's researchers, I too have sifted through the traces, trying to reanimate performances that are irremediably lost. However, as a scholar of performance, I must better heed *Arcadia*'s warning that these traces mislead, as Hannah and Bernard learn. (Doubt is cast even on the game book that records Byron's dead hare. "[M]y

24. Roach J., *op. cit.*, p. 3.
25. Hesiod, *Theogony, Works and Days, Shield*, tr. A. N. Athanassakis, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004, p. 68.
26. A genealogy of the motif is provided by Panofsky E., "*Et in Arcadia Ego*: On the Conception of Transience in Poussin and Watteau," R. Klibansky and H.J. Paton (eds.), *Philosophy and History*, New York, Harper & Row Publishers, 1963, p. 223-254.
27. Zeifman H., "The Comedy of Eros: Stoppard in Love," K.E. Kelly (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Tom Stoppard*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 187.

shot was earlier!" Augustus will report in the final scene: "He said I missed by a hare's breadth" [106].) The artefacts I have scrutinized—books, a typescript, videotape, photos, reviews—can only hazily call to mind what I didn't witness. "You'd have to be there, you silly bitch!" (64), as Bernard taunts Hannah.

In some cases, I was. But performance, we know, lives only in memory. We can never pin it down because of its perpetual movement, as the present recedes ever deeper into the past. The joy of theatre, however, is that each new performance will summon the shadowy ghosts of its predecessors even as the latest surrogate transforms the role anew. After all, each performance—like each deployment of a given word—produces new meanings, which necessarily differ from the spectral ancestors it summons. See, for example, Stoppard's use of the word *Caro*, which unexpectedly returns in the play's second scene as the name of Hannah's book. Citations mutate endlessly. The thing the audience encountered before was never identical, and not only because performance is imperfectly reproducible from night to night but also because the context of the encounter is always different—perennially repopulated, we might say, by different phantoms. Each time we see *Arcadia*, our understanding of it shifts. "*L'itérabilité altère*,"[28] as Jacques Derrida explained, deploying the very concept—iterability—that defines Thomasina's equation, whose each new value produces (and eventually ghosts) its successors. Indeed, Thomasina's iteration speaks fundamentally to the nature of performance, with its imprecisely repetitive enactments unspooling endlessly down the one-way street of time: a "complex variation in similitude,"[29] as Martin Meisel has memorably characterized the play's twinned plots.

What is past cannot be recouped, as the second law of thermodynamics teaches us; the energy is lost. And death will always accompany *Arcadia*; heartbreakingly, the fire that claims Thomasina is on the horizon. But there are compensations. The perpetual present of performance may push the past ever farther out of reach, but so too does it forestall the future, and every night when the curtain rises, Thomasina will begin again: "Septimus, what is carnal embrace?" (2).

28. Derrida J., *Limited Inc*, Paris, Éditions Galilée, 1990, p. 120.
29. Meisel M., "The Last Waltz: Tom Stoppard's Poetics of Science," *The Wordsworth Circle*, n° 38, Winter/Spring 2007, p. 19.

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